

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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With the exception of Essex County all of Region 7 received at least 5" of rain in June. Northern Clinton County received 6-7" and a large swath from Hamilton County north to Franklin County suffered over 7". Temperatures for the month deviated less than a degree from normal either way everywhere except for an area in Hamilton County, which was 1-3° colder than normal.

In July temperatures followed the same pattern with deviations from normal of less than a degree either way except for a small area in southeast Essex County which was 1-3° warmer than normal. July was a wet month in Region 7. Essentially the entire Region absorbed at least 3-4" of precipitation. All of Hamilton and some of both Essex and Franklin Counties received 4-5". Scattered small areas of Clinton County got only 2-3"; similarly, small areas of Hamilton and Franklin Counties got over 5".

August precipitation levels did not depart significantly from those of July. Small scattered areas experienced 5-6" of rain. The bulk of Region 7 received 4-5", while southern portions got 3-4" of precipitation. Clinton was the driest county, where it averaged 2-3" of rainfall with some areas getting less than 2". August was the warmest of the three months of the season. All of Clinton County, the northern half of Franklin County and the northeast corner of Essex County were 1-3° warmer than normal. The remainder of the Region was 3-5° above average.

The level of Lake Champlain began the season at 97.4 feet and declined nearly linearly to 94.3 feet on 31 August. At the former level the mud flats at Laurin's Pool were under water and only began to reappear when the northward

shorebird migration was over. In July the level was low enough to expose most of these mud flats. Both Least Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher were recorded as the southward migration began. By early August the flats at Laurin's Pool were completely dry creating unfavorable conditions. Thus, shorebird sightings along Lake Champlain were mostly restricted to the sandy exposed deltas at Ausable Point and Noblewood Park.

The 20 June sighting of a pair of **Trumpeter Swans** on Chasm Lake at Altona Flat Rock in June was only the second summer record for Region 7. A photo of a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** carrying a caterpillar was the first record of confirmed breeding for this species in Clinton County. Until 2020, Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seldom detected in Region 7. The average number of summer season reports from 2003 through 2019 was a mere 0.89 (eBird. 2023. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. Accessed: May 2, 2023). In 2020, there were 36 reports of Yellow-billed Cuckoo which represented a steep and widespread influx of this species. Numbers of reports continued to remain solid in 2021 and 2022 with 17 and 20, respectively. This intense spike in numbers directly correlates with the recent spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*) outbreak.

Sandhill Crane bred successfully at its Tupper Lake site for the seventh consecutive year.

Bonaparte's Gulls, once the most dominant late-summer gull species on Lake Champlain, was shockingly absent for a second year in a row. The Region's maximum count this season came from Noblewood Park, as expected; however, it involved a paltry 14 individuals compared to the several hundred we've grown accustomed to. Most of the historic staging areas not only attract large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls, but they persist throughout the latter half of the summer season and well into the fall. Since 2021, this trend came to a near complete halt, and a gull species that was once a daily late summer sighting became mysteriously scarce.

Bonaparte's Gulls depart from their northern breeding grounds in late July. Individuals begin arriving and staging along the west side of Lake Champlain, and favoring the large sandy deltas that form at the mouths of the Boquet and Ausable Rivers where they often remain through the fall season. Noblewood Park in Willsboro is situated at the mouth of the Boquet River and has historically served as the most popular staging area for Bonaparte's Gulls in Region 7, thus their initial decline in 2021 was first noticed at this location. Efforts to detect Bonaparte's Gulls at other known staging areas, as well as foraging areas in the middle of Lake Champlain, produced the same results—a recognized steep reduction in numbers. See graph below.

A snapshot of summer season high count eBird data from Noblewood Park since 2002 portrays this noted drop in numbers. It's possible that 2012 was a down year for Bonaparte's Gulls as indicated by comparatively low numbers at other known staging areas. And while 2005 appears to be on the low side, totals jumped

to 500 individuals in September, providing evidence that Bonaparte's Gulls did eventually show up that year. Fall high counts are sometimes greater than summer. Unfortunately, that was not the case in 2021 or 2022, and fall numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were also comparatively low. The 0 recorded individuals in 2002 can be attributed to an absence of data. The back-to-back low counts at Noblewood Park in 2021 and 2022 clearly indicate a change in the pattern and distribution of post breeding Bonaparte's Gulls on Lake Champlain. Whether this is a temporary or more permanent change is yet to be fully understood.

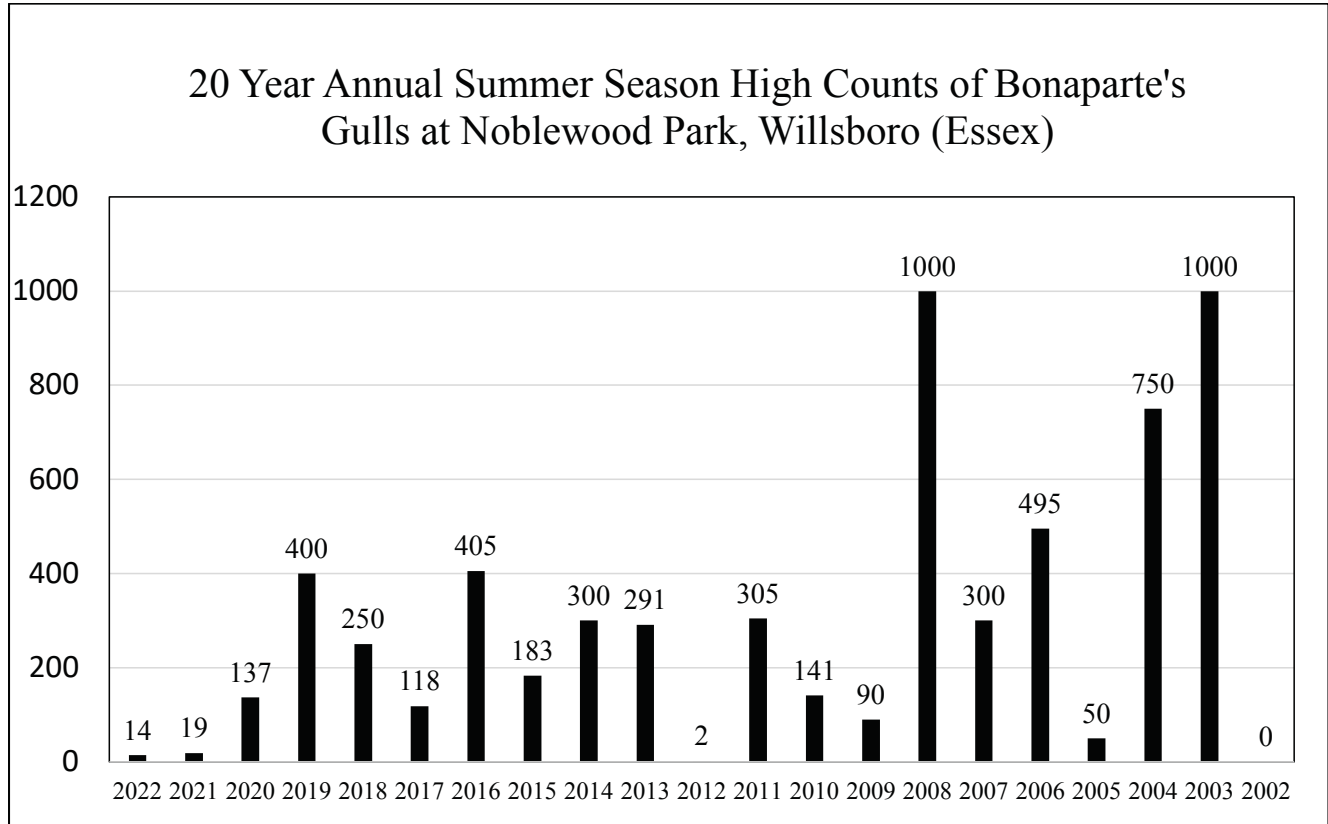
The decrease in Bonaparte's Gulls directly correlates with a drop in the number of species that associate with them. For instance, Common Tern numbers were drastically reduced to mere single digits, and Little Gull went from regular in summer to absent. Between New York and Vermont, jaegers have been uncommon yet annual on Lake Champlain, but none have been observed in the past two years.

Region 7 remains a reliable area to find Herring X Great Black-backed Gull hybrids, primarily at established gull congregations along Lake Champlain. It's been suspected that these hybrids originate from the gull nesting islands in the middle of Lake Champlain, such as the Four Brothers. On 20 August, an adult hybrid was observed at Noblewood Park accompanied by a begging juvenile.

A **Snowy Egret** reported from Cumberland Head was only the second summer record in the last ten years for Region 7 though there are records of multiple summer sightings in the same year prior to the advent of eBird.

Grasshopper Sparrow was reported from both Constable and the Whallon Bay areas. The former represents a new detection area, but perhaps not surprising given the abundance of habitat and lack of general observer coverage. The Whallon Bay area encompasses a large network of hayfields and pasture lands in private ownership totaling nearly 1000 acres in open fields. This area in the Town of Essex, where Whallons Bay Road meets Clark Road and Cross Road has been referred to in the past as the "Magic Triangle." Perhaps the "Essex Grasslands" is a more suitable descriptor of these ecologically important lands that now host a small breeding population of Grasshopper Sparrows and other more common, yet declining grassland specialists. Both summer sightings of Grasshopper Sparrow in Constable and Essex continue to add encouragement for this species.

Confirmation of breeding for **Palm Warbler** at Silver Lake Bog was a first for Clinton County. And for the second year in a row, Prairie Warbler was discovered on 20 June at Altona Flat Rock, this time involving three separate individuals, all of which were singing and apparently on territory. While the breeding code hasn't moved past "probable" all signs point to this location as the northernmost breeding area for this species in New York State, just 10 miles south of the Canada border. The jack pine dominated sandstone pavement barrens found at this location offers exceptional habitat for this species.



CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFR – Altona Flat Rock; **AM** – Ausable Marsh; **BB** – Bloomingdale Bog; **BLC** – Bald Ledge Club; **BRM** – Bouquet Ri Mouth; **CH** - Cumberland Head; **CN** – Constable; **CP** – Crown Pt; **CR** – Chazy Riverlands; **LCTM** – Lower La Chute Ticonderoga Marsh; **NP** – Noblewood P; **PC** – Putts Creek; **TRd** – Tracy Rd; **WMt** – Whiteface Mt; **WRS** – Webb Royce Swamp.

Co-CF, -CN, -FL, -FY, -NE, -NB, -NY, -ON –Atlas breeding codes (see page 415).

Snow Goose: Tupper L 9 Jun (ER), late.

Mute Swan: 2 Inlet 19 Jun (PR).

Trumpeter Swan: AFR 20 Jun (DHR).

Wood Duck: 42 LCTM 21 Jun (GaC), Co-FL.

Blue-winged Teal: CR 2 Jun (BK); 7 Shaw Pd 12 Jul (JVG), Co-FL.

Northern Shoveler: 3 CR 7 Jul (SSM, PJL).

Gadwall: Spruce Lodge Nature Trail 5 Aug (RH).

American Wigeon: 3 LCTM 30 Aug (G&MC).

American Black Duck: 9 St. Regis Falls 5 Aug (PMc), Co-FL.

Green-winged Teal: 4 AM 22 Aug (ABel), Co-FL.

Ring-necked Duck: 8 Paul Smiths Jul (EA), Co-FL.

Greater Scaup: CH 20 Aug (BK, SJ), early.

Bufflehead: NP 15 Aug (SR), early.

Common Goldeneye: 8 NP 11 Aug (SR).

Hooded Merganser: 9 TRd 21 Jun (SR), Co-FL.

Common Merganser: 4 CH 3 Jul (SJ, BK), Co-FL.

Red-breasted Merganser: 4 NP 3 Jun (DHR), late.

Wild Turkey: 12 Whallons Bay Rd 11 Aug (SR), Co-FL.

Ruffed Grouse: 3 Sabattis Circle 14 Jun (K&CF), Co-FL.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 7 NP 15 Aug (SR).

Pied-billed Grebe: 4 Lake Alice WMA 2 Jul (ABd), Co-FL.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 3 CLIN (Lake Alice WMA 1 Jul (ABd), Co-CF, photos.), 1 FRAN, 16 ESSE; *intro*.

Black-bellied Cuckoo: 2 Ellenburg Depot 3 Jun (SI).

Common Nighthawk: 7 AFR 13 Jun (ABd).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: 4 Ellenburg 13 Jun (AS).

Chimney Swift: 7 CP 9 Jul (SR), Co-CN.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 3 CN 2 Jul (TL).

Virginia Rail: Shaw Pd 6 Aug (MB), Co-FY.

Sora: Ellenburg Depot 3 Jun (SI).

Common Gallinule: AM 8 Jun (SCam).

Sandhill Crane: 3 Oseetah Bog 10 Jun (MGI); 3 Tupper L 15 Jun (SR), Co-FL.

Black-bellied Plover: 2 BRM 11 Aug (DHR).

Killdeer: 39 BRM 15 Aug (DHR), Co-FL.

Semipalmated Plover: NP 8 Jun (MGI).

Sanderling: NP 3 Aug (DHR).

Dunlin: Speculator 2 Jun (GD).

Least Sandpiper: CR 11 Jul (BK).

Pectoral Sandpiper: 2 AM 27 Aug (DHR).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 40 NP 8 Jun (MGI).

Short-billed Dowitcher: CR 11 Jul (BK).

American Woodcock: 2 Tahawus Club 5 Aug (JP).

Wilson's Snipe: 5 Ellenburg Depot 1 Jun (SI).

Spotted Sandpiper: 8 Plattsburgh 16 Aug (KMc).

Solitary Sandpiper: Fred Carey Road 8 Jul (SR).

Lesser Yellowlegs: CR 21 Jul (BK).

Greater Yellowlegs: Clear Pd 14 Jul (JSa).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 14 NP 15 Aug (SR); *intro*.

Ring-billed Gull: 53 NP 13 Jul (DHR), Co-FL.

Herring Gull: 4 Lower Saranac L 25 Jun (BF), Co-NE.

Great Black-backed Gull: 8 Saranac Ri Mouth 6 Aug (JJh).

Herring X Great Black-backed Gull: NP 28 Jul & 20 Aug (SR, CC, DHR); BRM 24 Aug (DHR).

Caspian Tern: 43 NP 13 Jul (DHR), Co-FL.

Black Tern: 5 NP 23 Aug (DHR).

Common Tern: max 3 Point au Roche 10 Jun (GE).

Common Loon: 7 Dannemora 16 Jul (DE).

Double-crested Cormorant: 200 Point au Roche 10 Jun (GE).

American Bittern: TRd 30 Jun (SR), Co-CF.

Least Bittern: AM 3 Jun (JB).

Great Blue Heron: 35 Wadhams 24 Jun (EJ), Co-FY.

Great Egret: 5 PC 26 Jul (SR).

Snowy Egret: CH 3 Jul (BK).

Green Heron: 4 PC 26 Jul (SR), Co-FL.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: CR 22 Aug (ABel), Co-FL.

Turkey Vulture: 10 Willsboro Pt 21 Jul.

Osprey: 3 AM 22 Aug (ABel).

Northern Harrier: reps in all 4 counties.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Osgood Ri 4 Jul (CV), Co-CF.

Cooper's Hawk: Bangor 15 Jul (ABel), Co-CF.

Northern Goshawk: 2 Debar P Rd Aug 20 (B. Bond, N. Main).

Bald Eagle: 2 Meacham L 26 Jun (EW), Co-NY.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 AFR 20 Jun (DHR).

Broad-winged Hawk: TRd 3 Jul (SR), Co-CF.

Red-tailed Hawk: 2 AFR 20 Jun (DHR).

Eastern Screech Owl: AM 25 Aug (SR).

Great Horned Owl: 2 Essex 19 Aug (DW).

Barred Owl: 3 Taylor Pd Campground 29 Jun (AVK), Co-FL.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Santanoni Peak 20 Jul (BC), Co-FL.

Belted Kingfisher: Ensign Pd 28 Jun (SR), Co-CF.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 3 AM 3 Jun (BK).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3 Forestdale Rd 29 Jun (AVK), Co-FY.

Black-backed Woodpecker: 3 BB 21 Jun (RH), Co-FL.

Northern Flicker: 5 AM 15 Jul (WA), Co-FL.

Pileated Woodpecker: 2 Port Henry 3 Aug (SR).

American Kestrel: 2 CN 4 Jul (DN), Co-FL.

Merlin: 2 Loon L 10 Jun (DN).

Peregrine Falcon: Pyramid L 8 Jul (EG), Co-FL.

Great Crested Flycatcher: 7 PC 26 Jul (SR), Co-CF.

Eastern Kingbird: 6 AM 15 Jul (WA), Co-FL.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 2 Minerva 4 Jul (KB), Co-CF.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: 2 Port Henry 18 Jul (SR), Co-NB.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 6 Wmt 3 Jun (KW).

Alder Flycatcher: 4 Moose Ri Plains 20 Jun (GL), Co-FY.

Willow Flycatcher: 4 BRM 11 Aug (DHR), Co-FL.

Least Flycatcher: 10 Spring Pd Bog 10 Jun (MP).

Eastern Phoebe: 6 BB 16 Aug (N. Martin).

Yellow-throated Vireo: 2 LCTM 21 Jun (GaC).

Blue-headed Vireo: 2 Port Henry 18 Jul (SR), Co-FY.

Philadelphia Vireo: Chapel Pd 12 Jun (S. Carroll).

Warbling Vireo: 4 LCTM 30 Jul (SR), Co-FL.

Red-eyed Vireo: 38 Algonquin Peak 17 Jun (RN).

Canada Jay: Sabattis Bog 14 Jun (GaC), Co-FL.

Fish Crow: 2 Speculator 3 Jun (GD); Wilcox Dock 11 Aug (NO); Wilcox Dock 26 Aug (J.Jones).

Common Raven: 4 Rainbow L 3 Jul (PR), Co-FL.

Boreal Chickadee: 9 Giant Mt 16 Aug (SL).

Tufted Titmouse: 4 BLC 29 Jun (G&MC), Co-CF.

Horned Lark: Malone 29 Jun (AA-L).

Bank Swallow: 6 PC 9 Jul (SR), Co-FY.

Tree Swallow: 40 AM 23 Jun (CM).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: 20 LCTM 29 Jun (WA).

Purple Martin: 3 Elk Inn Rd 23 Jul (SR), Co-FL.

Barn Swallow: 4 North Hudson 30 Jun (SR), Co-NY.

Cliff Swallow: 2 CN 2 Jul (TL), Co-CF.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 8 Algonquin Peak 17 Jun (RN).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 3 Minerva 26 Jun (BF), Co-CF.

Cedar Waxwing: 3 LCTM 21 Jun (GaC), Co-CN.

Brown Creeper: 5 BB 26 Jun (JMc), Co-FL.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 2 NP 28 Jul (SR).

House Wren: 4 Saranac Lake 22 Jun (JSt), Co-NY.

Winter Wren: 9 Black Pd 28 Jun (BB), Co-FY.

Marsh Wren: 12 NP 30 Jul (SR), Co-FL.

Carolina Wren: 4 Hay Meadow Brook 21 Jun (G&MC), Co-FL.

Gray Catbird: Ensign Pd 28 Jun (SR), Co-CF.

Brown Thrasher: Bangor 29 Jun (ABel), Co-CF.

Northern Mockingbird: 2 Ticonderoga 22 Jul (G&MC), Co-CN.

Veery: 4 BB 1 Jun (JSc).

Bicknell's Thrush: 6 Wmt 24 Jun (PMa); 10 Wmt 3 Jul, Co-FL; 50 Wmt 23 Jul (LP).

Swainson's Thrush: 11 Wmt 3 Jul, Co-CF.

Hermit Thrush: 3 Elk Inn Rd 23 Jul (SR), Co-CN.

Wood Thrush: 3 Hay Meadow Brook 21 Jul (G&MC), Co-FL.

Evening Grosbeak (type 3): BB 19 Aug (DHR), photo & spectrogram.

Purple Finch: 4 TRD 26 Jun (SR), Co-CF.

Red Crossbill: 4 Moose Ri Plains 20 Jun (GL), Co-FL.

American Goldfinch: 4 WRS 15 Aug (SR), Co-CF.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Whallons Bay Rd 1-3 Jun & 28 Jul (m. ob.); CN 4 & 5 Jun (TL).

Chipping Sparrow: 5 Owls Head 7 Jul (PR), Co-FL.

Field Sparrow: 8 AFR 20 Jun (DHR).

White-crowned Sparrow: Avalanche Pass 3 Jul (JSp), late.

White-throated Sparrow: Osgood Ri 20 Jun (JSt), Co-CF.

Savannah Sparrow: Bangor 29 Jun (ABel), Co-ON.
Lincoln's Sparrow: BB 21 Jun (RH), Co-CF.
Swamp Sparrow: 5 Bartlett Pd 24 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Eastern Towhee: 2 Ellensburg Depot 29 Jun (SI), Co-NY.

Bobolink: 7 Mooers 20 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Eastern Meadowlark: Willsboro 22 Jul (DHR), Co-CF.
Baltimore Oriole: 4 BLC 29 Jun (G&MC), Co-CF.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 Madawaska Flow 22 Jun (AVC), Co-CF.

Ovenbird: 2 Wolf Pd 22 Jun (AVC), Co-CF.
Louisiana Waterthrush: 4 LCTM 21 Jun (GaC), Co-FY.
Northern Waterthrush: Blue Mt Road 9 Jul (DC), Co-CN.
Golden-winged Warbler: CN 5 Jun (BMc); 3 CN 2 Jul (JSh), Co-FY.
"Brewster's" Warbler: WRS 3 Jun (DHR); Churubusco 6 Jun (SR).
Black- and-white Warbler: Sabattis Circle 14 Jun (K&CF), Co-CF.
Tennessee Warbler: 3 Port Henry 25 Aug (SR).
Nashville Warbler: 3 TRd 21 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Mourning Warbler: 4 CN 2 Jul (TL), Co-FL.
Common Yellowthroat: Osgood Ri 20 Jun (JSt), Co-CF.
American Redstart: Burke 6 Jul (DN), Co-CF.

Cape May Warbler: 2 Minerva 14 Aug (GaC).
Northern Parula: 3 TRd 21 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Magnolia Warbler: 4 Tomany Mt 3 Jul (CK), Co-FL.
Bay-breasted Warbler: Minerva 15 Aug (GaC).
Blackburnian Warbler: 10 Wolf Pd 22 Jun (AVC), Co-CF.
Yellow Warbler: 6 AM 15 Jul (WA), Co-CF.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: Churubusco 20 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Blackpoll Warbler: 10 WMT 24 Jun (PM).
Black-throated Blue Warbler: Gabriels 7 Jul (CP), Co-CF.
Palm Warbler: Silver Lake Bog 21 Jun (RH), Co-CF.
Pine Warbler: 3 CN 3 Jul (TL), Co-FY.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 Bad Luck Mt 26 Jun (BF), Co-FL.
Prairie Warbler: 3 Ticonderoga 11 Jun (SR); 3 AFR 20 Jun (DHR); 3 Oxbow L 20 Jun (EF).
Black-throated Green Warbler: Debraine L 30 Jun (BD), Co-CF.
Canada Warbler: 3 Bartlett Pd 16 Jul (SR), Co-FL.
Wilson's Warbler: Port Henry 26 & 28 Aug (SR).

Scarlet Tanager: LCTM 21 Jun (GaC), Co-FY.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Mooers 20 Jun (SR), Co-CF.
Indigo Bunting: 6 BLC 23 Jul (G&MC), Co-CF.